

Syphilis is Preventable

Syphilis is a dangerous sexually transmitted infection. If not treated it can even lead to death. Read below to learn how you can protect yourself and your relatives.



What is syphilis?

Syphilis is a **sexually transmitted infection** that can cause **serious health problems** if not treated. There are stages of syphilis primary, secondary, latent, and tertiary.

How is syphilis spread?

Syphilis spreads through **direct contact with a syphilis sore(s) during sexual activities**. Syphilis sores can be found on or around the penis, vagina, anus, in the rectum, on the lips, or in the mouth. Syphilis can also spread from infected mothers to their unborn children.

What does syphilis look like?

The signs and symptoms of syphilis change during each stage of the infection (primary, secondary, latent, and tertiary)

- **Primary** stage syphilis generally causes a sore or sores at the original site of infection, usually around the genitals. Sores are typically firm, round, and painless.
- **Secondary** stage syphilis symptoms usually include rash, swollen lymph nodes, and fever.
- **Latent** stage syphilis causes no signs or symptoms
- **Tertiary** stage syphilis causes severe medical problems to the heart, brain, and other major organs. Doctors can diagnose tertiary syphilis with the help of multiple tests.

Risk Factors

Any sexually active person is at risk for syphilis if participating in unprotected sexual activities.

Prevention

Safe sex and regular testing can help prevent syphilis.

- All pregnant women should be tested for syphilis at their first prenatal visit
- You should get tested often if you are sexually active and
 - are a man who has sex with men;
 - are living with HIV; or
 - have a partner(s) who have tested positive for syphilis

Can syphilis be cured?

Yes! Your healthcare provider can cure syphilis with the right antibiotics. Unfortunately, the treatment may not undo any damage that the infection has already done.

